



FINAL REPORT

Minor Driver's License Interim Study Committee

October 13 and November 13, 2023

MEMBERS

Senator Adrian Dickey, Co-chairperson
Senator Chris Cournoyer
Senator Todd E. Taylor

Representative Brian Best, Co-chairperson
Representative Amy Nielsen
Representative Brent Siegrist

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

Ms. Tina Wahlert, Department of Education (DE)
Mr. Brett Tjepkes, Department of Public Safety (DPS)
Ms. Melissa Gillett, Department of Transportation
(DOT)
Ms. Linda Rouse, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD)
Mr. Tony Cotto, National Association of Mutual
Insurance Companies (NAMIC)

LSA CONTACTS: Organizational staffing provided by: Tyler Heeren, Legal Counsel, 515.725.0480; Minutes prepared by: J.D. Arnett, Legal Counsel, 515.281.3745

CONTENTS

- I. Authorization and Appointment
- II. Committee Proceedings
- III. October 13, 2023, Meeting
- IV. November 13, 2023, Meeting
 - A. Committee Discussion
 - B. Recommendations
- V. Materials Filed with the Legislative Services Agency



Minor Driver's License Interim Study Committee

I. Authorization and Appointment

Based on a request in 2023 Iowa Acts, Senate File 542, section 23, the Legislative Council established the Minor Driver's License Interim Study Committee to examine policy matters and make recommendations on statutory changes relating to licensed driving by persons between 14 and 18 years of age, and submit a report to the General Assembly on or before December 15, 2023.

II. Committee Proceedings

The committee was authorized to conduct two meetings during the 2023 Legislative Interim. The meetings were held on October 13, 2023, and November 13, 2023, in Room 103 of the State Capitol.

III. October 13, 2023, Meeting

Members of the committee elected temporary Co-chairpersons Dickey and Best as permanent co-chairpersons, and adopted the proposed rules for the committee that had been previously distributed.

The committee invited the ex officio, nonvoting members to provide comments. Ms. Melissa Gillett, Director of DOT's Motor Vehicle Division, provided background information on the three driver's licenses issued in this state. Ms. Gillett described national best practices related to persons between 14 and 18 years of age who are transitioning from driving with a parent to driving alone. She also provided background information related to how persons between 14 and 18 years of age can obtain a special minor's license and the restrictions placed on drivers who hold the license.

Ms. Tina Wahlert, Bureau Chief for School Improvement, DE, stated that DE is interested in participating in the committee's work and happy to assist as the committee's work proceeds. Ms. Wahlert stated DE does not have oversight over the special minor's license system, and the special minor's license system does not impact school accreditation.



Mr. Brett Tjepkes, Bureau Chief for the Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau, DPS, provided background information related to the work of the Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau, including educational programs provided to students. Mr. Tjepkes discussed the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) "Countermeasures That Work," and how the Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau's work is guided by that publication. Mr. Tjepkes stated that young drivers are overrepresented in fatal crashes relative to adults, and that in 2020, Iowa had the second highest percentage of fatal crashes among young adults in the country. Mr. Tjepkes stated that, according to NHTSA, the most effective countermeasure for young drivers involves a comprehensive system of graduated driver's license restrictions that allow new drivers to gain experience while restricting their exposure to dangerous driving situations. He discussed the difficulty in enforcing traffic restrictions under the graduated driver's license system and the difficulty in changing the behavior of young drivers. Mr. Tjepkes additionally discussed the resources available to law enforcement officers in enforcing the graduated driver's license system.

Ms. Linda Rouse, Division Administrator, IWD, discussed IWD's concerns related to matching employers with employees. Ms. Rouse asserted that the restrictions placed on drivers between 14 and 15 years of age may need to be changed to fully effectuate Senate File 542's changes to Iowa's youth employment laws. She recommended expanding opportunities for drivers between 14 and 15 years of age to drive to and from employment opportunities.

Mr. Tony Cotto, Director of Auto and Underwriting Policy, NAMIC, provided statistics related to vehicle crashes involving drivers between 14 and 18 years of age. Mr. Cotto discussed the use of graduated driver's license frameworks and how successful these frameworks have been in enhancing road safety. He also discussed the importance of tailoring driving restrictions under a graduated driver's license framework to the state that has adopted that framework. Mr. Cotto additionally discussed generally how insurance premiums are adjusted over time given how risk is calculated.



IV. November 13, 2023, Meeting

A. Committee Discussion

Committee members discussed changes related to current minor driver's license provisions for potential recommendation to the General Assembly. The changes generally related to the permitted locations specially licensed minors may drive; special restrictions on a special minor's license, including but not limited to the maximum safe driving distance for each trip, hours of operation, and minimum driver experience before issuing a license; special considerations for license administration and enforcing license restrictions; and penalties for violations of restrictions imposed on a special minor's license.

Following the discussion between legislative members, the ex officio members were invited to address the committee's ideas and proposed changes. The ex officio members provided guidance and information to the committee based on examples from each member's area of expertise. The ex officio members expressed gratitude for being invited to join the committee and reasserted a willingness to continue to be available to help all legislators during the upcoming and future legislative sessions.

B. Recommendations

The following recommendations were approved by unanimous vote by the voting members of the committee:

- Any potential changes to the special minor's license framework should incorporate the ability for the holder of the license to obtain a combined farm and work permit.
- Continue to require a school official to sign off in order for a student to be able to drive to school under a special minor's license.
- Require a parent or guardian to give his or her approval before the holder of a special minor's license will be allowed to obtain a permit to drive to work.

Minor Driver's License Interim Study Committee



- Eliminate the current restriction that prevents an individual from obtaining a special minor's license if the individual lives within one mile of the school in which the individual is enrolled.
- Holders of a special minor's license should only be able to drive for one hour before and after the start and end, respectively, of the licensee's approved event, and spectating extracurricular activities are not approved events.
- The proper starting point for discussions related to the size of the radius that will govern driving restrictions under the special minor's license is 25 miles from the school the holder of the special minor's license attends.
- Holders of a special minor's license who are enrolled in public school should be allowed to drive to school under such license so long as the holder's primary residence is within 25 miles of the school, with an exception for holders whose primary residence is located outside of that 25-mile radius and still within the public school district.
- Holders of a special minor's license who are enrolled in nonpublic school should be allowed to drive to school under such license so long as the holder's primary residence is within 25 miles of the school, with no exception for holders whose primary residence is located outside of that 25-mile radius.
- Current law related to the number and types of passengers a person holding a special minor's license may transport should be maintained.
- Allow two additional residences to be added under the special minor's license.
- Allow a holder of a special minor's license to drive through a contiguous school district, so long as that contiguous school district is within the 25-mile allowable driving radius.
- Suspend the special minor's license of a person who violates the terms of the license for three months, and prohibit the person from obtaining an intermediate license for three months.



Minor Driver's License Interim Study Committee

V. Materials Filed with the Legislative Services Agency

Materials were distributed at or in connection with the meeting and are filed with the Legislative Services Agency. The materials may be accessed from the "Committee Documents" link on the committee's Internet site accessible at the following address:

www.legis.iowa.gov/committees/meetings/meetingsListComm?groupID=39587&ga=90&session=1

1. DOT Documents

- a. DOT Recommendations to the Minor Driver's License Interim Study Committee
- b. Fact Sheet: Iowa's Young Drivers
- c. Instruction Permit Card
- d. Intermediate License Card
- e. Minor School License Card

2. DPS Documents

- a. DPS Comments to the Minor Driver's License Interim Study Committee
- b. Countermeasures That Work — Young Drivers
- c. Percentage of Traffic Fatalities in Crashes Involving Young Drivers, by State, 2020
- d. Young and New Driver Resource Center: Brain Development

3. NAMIC Documents — IA Teen Driving Committee